

will even go beyond him in expressing my good opinion of our situation. He thinks foreign assistance necessary to us: I think we should but be injured by it. We are able to defend our own rights, and to frustrate the attempt of any nation upon earth to govern us by force. For my part I would risk my all in resisting every attempt of this kind at every hazard.

But let us see what assistance he offers us; and we find France and Spain held out for that purpose, although not as mediators, to "strengthen the connexion between Great-Britain and America," but wholly to dissolve it.

As to Spain, it is well known that the government of her own unwieldy colonies is already a weight which she can hardly bear; and some profound politicians have thought that, from the first, she has rather been weakened than strengthened by them; and that all her returns of gold and silver from America are but a poor compensation for the lives and cost with which they are purchased. It may well be questioned, then, supposing Spain were able to assist us in erecting an independent empire in America, whether her jealousy would permit her to risk the possibility of our seducing her own American subjects into an alliance with us, for the purpose of a future revolt from herself. But our author mentions France as well as Spain, and thus proposes that both branches of the Bourbon family, so long the terror of protestants and freemen, should now join as their protectors! By what means, or at what price, is this marvelous revolution in the system of politics, religion, and liberty, to be accomplished? How are these two powers to divide these colonies between them? Is their guardianship to be joint or separate? Under whose wing is Pennsylvania to fall - that of the most Catholic or most Christian king?

I confess that these questions stagger me; and, till answered to satisfaction, cannot but give every good man the most painful apprehensions concerning the future fate of his country. To be told, by the author of *Common Sense*, that all this is mere prejudice; that we must divest ourselves of every opinion in which we have been educated, in order to digest his pure doctrine; and throw down what our fathers and we have been building up for ages, to make room for his visionary fabric - I say to be told this, is only insult instead of argument; and can be tolerated by none but those who are so far inflamed or interested, that separation from Great-Britain at any risk is their choice, rather than reconciliation, upon whatever terms.

This, I much fear, is the temper of those who are constantly dinning in our ears the necessity of an immediate declaration of independence, for the sake of procuring foreign assistance, especially that of France. Their real desire is to shut the door against all future reconciliation by this precipitate step. The matter of foreign assistance is a mere decoy. Can we imagine that if France thought it her interest to quarrel with Great-Britain for any benefits to be derived from us, her delicacy would stand in her way? Was she ever restricted by such delicacy in any of the former civil wars of her neighbours, especially those of Great-Britain? But the truth is, that in the present ruinous state of her finances, and feeble condition of her fleets, she will scarce think it prudent, for any prospects we can yield her, to rush into a new and expensive war, when so ill recruited after the blood and treasure which she lavished so ineffectually in the last.

Would it be wise, then, to risk a refusal from her, or to mix our affairs with those of any foreign power whatever in this contest with Great-Britain? No; I conceive this would only protract our wars, encrease our dangers, weaken our force, and probably end in our ruin. And of all nations in the world, France is the last from which she should seek assistance, even if it were necessary. What kind of assistance do we expect from her! gold and silver she can but ill afford to give us. Her men we have no occasion for; and, in a word, until she has a fleet able to contend with that of England, she can do us no essential service. The want of such a fleet has been the great bar to her numerous projects for universal empire. Can any protestant, can you my countrymen, ever wish to see her possessed of such a fleet, assist her in attaining it, or willingly give her footing in America? Would she then be contented to be the humble ally of these colonies, or would she not, in her own right, resume Canada, which according to the limits she formerly claimed, is larger than all our provinces together? Could we hinder her from introducing what multitudes of her people she might think proper into that country where they have already a great body of their friends to receive them? In that case we should soon be left without room for the increasing number of our posterity. Would we in upon the sea shore, and armies behind us, and fleets before us, be either crushed to pieces, obliged to submit to the absolute dominion of France, or to throw ourselves back upon the protection of Great-Britain.

This consideration is truly alarming, and France has never shown herself so worthy of confidence among the nations of Europe, as to induce us to run such risks, by throwing ourselves precipitately into her arms. She is so notorious to the whole world for her disregard to the most sacred treaties, that *Gallica Fides*, or *French Faith*, is become as proverbial now, as *Panica Fides*, or *Carthaginian Faith*, of old. It could scarce have been imagined, that the author of *Common Sense*, after telling us that "the blood of the slain, the weeping voice of nature, cries, 'TIS TIME TO PART' - eternally to part - from the limited monarchy of Great Britain, (whatever future terms might be offered us) would so soon have recommended to us a new alliance with the arbitrary monarchs of France and Spain. Bloody massacres, the revocation of sacred edicts, and the most unrelenting persecutions, have certainly taught American protestants, and especially our German brethren, what sort of faith we are to expect from POPISH PRINCES, and from nations who are strangers to liberty themselves, and envy the enjoyment of it to others!

In short, I am not able, with all the pains I have taken, to understand what is meant by a declaration of independence, unless it is to be drawn up in the form of a solemn abjuration of Great-Britain, as a nation with which we can never more be connected; and this seems the doctrine of the author of *Common Sense*. But I believe he has made but few converts to this part of his scheme; for who knows, to what vicissitude of fortune we may yet be subjected?

We have already declared ourselves independent, as to all useful purposes, by resisting our oppressors, upon our own foundation; and while we keep upon this ground

we involve us in new dangers, and endanger our liberties still further, we are able, in our own element, upon the shore, to continue this resistance, and it is our duty to continue it, till Great-Britain is convinced (as she must soon be) of her fatal policy, and open her arms to reconciliation, upon the permanent and sure footing of mutual interest and safety.

Upon such a footing, we may again be happy. Our trade will be revived. Our husbandmen, our mechanics, our artificers will flourish. Our language, our laws and manners being the same with those of the nation with which we are again to be connected, that connexion will be natural; and we shall the more easily guard against future innovations. Pennsylvania has much to lose in this contest, and much to hope from a proper settlement of it. We have long flourished under our charter government. What may be the consequences of another form, we cannot pronounce with certainty; but this we know, that it is a road we have not travelled, and may, be worse than it is described.

CATON.

NEW-YORK, March 19th 1776.

We hear that ten sail of vessels were lately cut out of the harbour of St. Thomas, by some English ships of war, and carried to Antigua.

On Saturday last an express arrived here from Boston, which he left the Tuesday before, with a letter from his excellency general Washington, to brigadier general Lord Stirling, at New-York, of which the following is a copy.

MY LORD,

I AM now to acknowledge the receipt of your favour of the 11th instant, to give you my congratulations upon your appointment, by the honourable congress. If the intelligence is true, and to be depended on, which was brought by the gentleman to New-York, I think with you, that we shall have an opportunity of securing, and putting the continent in a tolerable posture of defence; and that the operations of the summer's campaign will not be so terrible as we were taught to expect, from the accounts and denunciations, which the ministry have held forth to the public.

I have the pleasure to inform you, that on the morning of the 17th instant, general Howe, with his army, abandoned the town of Boston without destroying it; an event of much importance, which must be heard with great satisfaction; and that we are now in full possession. Their embarkation and retreat were hurried and precipitate, and they have left behind them stores, of one thing and another, to a pretty considerable amount; among which are several pieces of heavy cannon, and one or two mortars, which are spiked. The town is in a much better situation, and less injured, than I expected, from the reports I have received; though to be sure it is much damaged, and many houses despoiled of their valuable furniture.

I believe they are still in King and Nantasket roads, and where they intend to make a descent next is altogether unknown; but, supposing New-York to be an object of great importance, and to be in their view, I must recommend your most strenuous and active exertions in preparing to prevent any designs or attempts they may have formed or make against it. I have detached the rifle-men and five battalions from hence to your assistance, which will be followed by others, as circumstances will allow. These, with what forces you have, and can assemble, if there should be any occasion, I trust, will be sufficient to hinder the enemy from possessing the city, or making a lodgement, till the main body of this army can arrive.

I am, my lord,
With great esteem,
Your most obedient and humble servant,
G. WASHINGTON.

The courier, who was himself in Boston, reports, we hear, that the enemy left there about forty horses almost starved, and that before they went off, they dismasted all the vessels in the harbour. General Putnam was arrived at New-Haven, on his way to New-York.

Extra of a letter from Cambridge.

Col. Mifflin had yesterday an interview with major Small, who informed him, that they expected the commissioners to treat with the congress and that the duke of Grafton was one of them. He also informed him, that they (in Boston) heard that gen. Clinton and his troops were taken.

PHILADELPHIA.

In CONGRESS, March 23, 1776.

Whereas the petitions of these united colonies to the king for the redress of great and manifest grievances have not only been rejected, but treated with scorn and contempt, and the opposition to designs evidently formed to reduce them to a state of servile subjection, and their necessary defence against hostile forces actually employed to subdue them, declared rebellion; and whereas an unjust war hath been commenced against them, which the commanders of the British fleets and armies have prosecuted, and still continue to prosecute, with their utmost vigour, and in a cruel manner, wasting, spoiling and destroying the country, burning houses and defenceless towns, and exposing the helpless inhabitants to every misery from the inclemency of the winter, and not only urging savages to invade the country, but instigating negroes to murder their masters; and whereas the parliament of Great-Britain hath lately passed an act, affirming these colonies to be in open rebellion; forbidding all trade and commerce with the inhabitants thereof, until they accept pardons; and submit to despotic rule; declaring their property, wherever found upon the water, liable to seizure and confiscation; and enacting, that what had been done there, by virtue of the royal authority, were just and lawful acts, and shall be so deemed; from all which it is manifest, that the iniquitous scheme concerted to deprive them of the liberty they have a right to by the laws of nature and the English constitution, will be pertinaciously pursued. It being, therefore, necessary to provide for their defence and security, and justifiable to make reprisals upon their enemies, or otherwise to annoy them, according to the laws of nations; the congress, trusting that such of their friends in Great-Britain (of whom it is confessed there are

some) who are well disposed to the cause of these colonies, will favour a declaration of property cannot be made) as shall suffer by capture, will impute it to the authors of our common calamities, DO DECLARE AND RESOLVE as follows, &c.

Resolved, That the inhabitants of these colonies be permitted to fit out armed vessels, to cruise on the enemies of these united colonies.

Resolved, That all ships and other vessels, their tackle, apparel and furniture, and all goods, wares and merchandizes, belonging to any inhabitant or inhabitants of Great-Britain, taken on the high seas, or between high and low water mark, by any armed vessel fitted out by any private person or persons, and to whom commissions shall be granted, and being libelled and prosecuted in any court erected for the trial of maritime affairs in any of these colonies, shall be deemed and adjudged to be lawful prize; and, after deducting and paying the wages the seamen and mariners on board of such captures as are merchant ships and vessels, shall be entitled to, according to the terms of their contracts, until the time of the adjudication, shall be condemned to and for the use of the owner or owners, and the officers, marines, and mariners of such armed vessel, according to such rules and proportions as they shall agree on. Provided always, that this resolution shall not extend, or be construed to extend, to any vessel bringing settlers, arms, ammunition, or warlike stores, to and for the use of these colonies; or any of the inhabitants thereof, who are friends to the American cause, or to such warlike stores, or to the effects of such settlers.

Resolved, That all ships or vessels, with their tackle, apparel and furniture, goods, wares and merchandizes, belonging to any inhabitant of Great-Britain as aforesaid, which shall be taken by any of the vessels of war of these United Colonies, shall be deemed forfeited, one third, after deducting and paying the wages of seamen and mariners as aforesaid, to the officers and men on board, and two thirds to the use of the United Colonies.

Resolved, That all ships or vessels with their tackle, apparel and furniture, goods, wares and merchandizes, belonging to any inhabitant of Great-Britain as aforesaid, which shall be taken by any vessel of war fitted out by and at the expense of any of the United Colonies, shall be deemed forfeited, and divided, after deducting and paying the wages of seamen and mariners as aforesaid, in such manner and proportion as the assembly or convention of such colony shall direct.

Resolved, That all vessels, their tackle, apparel and furniture, and cargoes belonging to inhabitants of Great-Britain as aforesaid, and all vessels which may be employed in carrying supplies to the ministerial armies, which shall happen to be taken near the shores of any of these colonies, by the people of the country, or detachments from the army, shall be deemed lawful prize, and the court of admiralty, within the said colony, is required on condemnation thereof, to adjudge, that all charges and expences which may attend the capture and trial be first paid out of the monies arising from the sale of the prize, and the remainder equally divided among all those who shall have been actually engaged and employed in taking the said prize: Provided, that where any detachments of the army shall have been employed as aforesaid, their part of the prize-money shall be distributed among them, in proportion to the pay of the officers and soldiers employed.

Extra from the minutes.

CHARLES THOMSON, secretary.

March 27. Died yesterday morning, the honourable SAMUEL WARD, Esq; late member of the continental congress; his remains will be interred this afternoon in the Baptist Church.

NORTH-CAROLINA.

Extra of a letter from brigadier general James Moore, in the continental service, to the hon. Cornelius Harriot, Esq; president of the provincial council, North-Carolina, dated Wilmington, March 2, 1776.

SIR,

ON the earliest intelligence that the Tories were collecting and embodying at Cross creek, which I received on the 5th of Feb. I proceeded to take possession of Rockfish bridge, within seven miles of Cross creek, which I considered as an important post. I was effected on the 15th with my own regiment, 5 pieces of artillery, and a part of the Bladen militia; but as our numbers were by no means equal to that of the Tories, I thought it most advisable to intrench and fortify that place, and wait for a reinforcement. By the 19th I was joined by col. Lillington with 150 of the Wilmington militia, col. Kenon with 100 of the Duplin militia, and col. Ash with about 100 of the volunteer independent rangers, making our numbers then in the whole about 1100; and from the best information I was able to procure, the Tory army, under command of gen. McDonald, amounted to about 14 or 1500. On the 20th they marched within four miles of us, and sent in by a flag of truce, the governor's proclamation, a manifesto and letter from the general, copies of which, together with another letter and my answers, you have inclosed. I then waited only until col. Martin and col. Thackstone, who I had certain intelligence were on their march, should get near enough to cut off their retreat, and determined to avail myself of the first favourable opportunity of attacking them. However, contrary to my expectations, I learnt on the 21st that they had the night before, and that morning crossed the N. West river at Campbellton with their whole army, sunk and destroyed all the boats, and taken their route the most direct way to Negro Head point. I then dispatched an express to col. Caswell, who was on his march to join us with about 800 men, and directed him to return and take possession of Corbett's ferry over Black-river and by every means in his power to obstruct, harass and distress them in their march; at the same time I directed col. Martin and col. Thackstone to take possession of Cross creek, in order to prevent their return that way. Col. Lillington and col. Ash I ordered, by a forced march, to endeavour if possible to reinforce col. Caswell, but if that could not be effected, to take possession of Moore's creek bridge, whilst I proceeded back with the remainder of our army to cross the N. West at Elizabeth town, so as either to meet them on their way to Corbett's ferry, or fall in their rear and surround them there. On the 23d I crossed the river at Elizabeth town, where I was compelled to wait for a supply of provisions until the 24th at night, having learnt that col. Caswell was still

I received an express from the Tories, that they had spiked a bridge had passed determined, as the date in boats descending about 60 Moore's creek bridge the same time actions; and became creek bridge if possible rear. The next day Dollyson's landing, I that night I sent an express to the situation of affairs, col. Lillington, who at the bridge, was Caswell, and that and destroyed a part of the next morning an alarm gun was scarce allowing our army with col. their attack on col. finding a small intruder empty, conclude their post, and in within thirty paces where they met a McCleod and capt. of the breastwork, wards of twenty balls few minutes their and most shamefully next day taken prisoner this action, from the to learn, is about 30 bers of them must many more that we may be eliminated at ed, one of which directed to inform you very dangerous information check to tor

he situation of affairs for me to request of the committee, I have large reason to apprehend from their disappointment have most spirit the worst of human at all, and I have not them from doing any

In order to left incurred by this expense col. Martin to demand, except 1000, those to secure the subject to your faith this place, unless other not think the service men in arms, I shall all except the regular about Cross creek until

Extra of a letter from the province congress, and now co province, to the president of the province from his camp at London.

SIR,

I have the pleasure an engagement with Creek bridge, on the about 1000 strong, composed of minute-men, the Dobbs and Wake, and battalion of minute-men Moore's creek the command of col. I report, were 3000; but have a prisoner, says it was unwell that day, McCleod, who seemed with capt. John Campbell number killed and wounded I was able to count were shot on their fallen into the water, I am, had not risen yet camp, such prisoners at least 50 of their militally put to the rout, a Mob arrived at our engagement was over; his and are now encamped was fought; and col. Martin with a large body of sufficient effectually to embody again. I then returned to New command, where I hoisted them. I here I the council should rise order in what manner officers and men behaved becoming freemen, col. lileges.

Letter from Donald M. dir-general in the service of the province.

SIR,

I herewith send the advice of the committee, Josiah Martin, under my command, to and countrymen. I shall the governor's proclamation, loyal subjects to register, I should have imagined the king's army, I have therefore you, that in case you do the royal standard, and take the necessary dignity.